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ABSTRACT

While research findings suggest that self-concept and perceptions of classroom environment may be interrelated, there is little empirical evidence to validate the existence of such a relationship. This study was conducted to examine the relationship between fourth- and fifth-grade students' self-concept and their perceptions of classroom environment. Fourth- and fifth-grade students (N=107) were administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (P-H) and the Classroom Environment Scale (CES) in a group format. Data were analyzed using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation procedure. The results indicated significant relationships between the P-H Total Score and four subscales of the CES: (1) Involvement; (2) Affiliation; (3) Teacher Support; and (4) Order and Organization. Further analysis revealed several significant relationships between the subscales of the P-H and the CES. These findings strongly suggest a relationship between children's self-concept and environmental cues or factors involved in teacher-student and student-student interactions. (Author/NB)

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Comparison of Self-Concept and Classroom Environment in Elementary School Children

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Abstract

The present study investigated the relationship between children's self-concept and their perceptions of the classroom environment in fourth- and fifth-grade students. One hundred seven students, from fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms were administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (P-H) and the Classroom Environment Scale (CES) in a group format. Data were analyzed utilizing the Pearson Product-Moment correlation procedure. Results indicated significant relationships between the P-H Total Score and the following subscales of the CES: (a) Involvement, (b) Affiliation, (c) Teacher Support, and (d) Order and Organization. Further analysis revealed several significant relationships between the subscales of the P-H and the CES. These results are discussed in terms of the environmental variables present in teacher-student and student-student interactions that are related to the development of self-concept in children.

Comparison of Self-Concept and Classroom Environment in Elementary School Children

The interest in self-concept arises from the assumption that the improvement in self-concept may facilitate improvements in other areas (e.g., academic achievement, learning). Shavelson and Bolus (1982) define self-concept as an individual's perception of self. The individual's self-concept is formed through experience with the environment, interactions with significant others, and attributions of one's own behavior (Shavelson & Bolus, 1982; Thomas, 1973).

The purpose of the present investigation was to examine the relationship between fourth- and fifth-grade students' self-concept and their perceptions of classroom environment. While prior research indicates that self-concept and perceptions of classroom environment may be interrelated (Galluzzi, Kirby, & Zucker, 1980), there is minimal empirical evidence to validate that such a relationship does exist. Thus, this study was an attempt to provide

further evidence for the existence of such a relationship.

Method

Fourth- and fifth-grade students (n = 107) from intact regular classrooms at an elementary laboratory school, located at Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, LA., served as participants in this study. The sample was comprised of 53 males and 54 females ranging in age from 9 through 11 years. Students were administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (P-H) and the Classroom Environment Scale (CES) while in their respective classrooms (group format). Because the CES was not specifically designed for use with fourth- and fifth-grade students, each question was read aloud in order to minimize any problems related to reading difficulties. During administration, students were also encouraged to ask questions pertaining to any of the statements that they did not understand. Students were allowed as much time as they needed in order to complete the two inventories. Data collection lasted approximately 90 minutes per administration.

Results

Results of the Pearson correlation analyses revealed a number of statistically significant correlations (*df* for all comparisons = 105). The P-H Total Score was related to four of the subscales of the CES: (a) Involvement (r = .26, p<.05); (b) Affiliation (r = .32, p<.01); (c) Teacher Support (r = .22, p<.05); and (d) Order and Organization (r = .32, p<.01). These findings indicate that in the present sample, the P-H Total Score was related to the three subscales of the CES that comprise the Relationship Dimension (Involvement, Affiliation, and Teacher Support).

Three of the CES subscales were found to be related to several of the subscales of the CES. The Involement subscale of the CES was significantly correlated with the P-H subscales of Intellectual and School Status (r = .26, p<.01); Anxiety (r = .24, p<.05); and Popularity (r = .27, p<.01). The Affiliation subscale of the CES was related to the P-H subscales of Intellectual and School Status (r = .20, p<.05); Physical Appearance and Attributes (r = .25, p<.01); Anxiety (r = .26, p<.01); Popularity (r = .28,

$p<.01$); and Happiness and Satisfaction ($r = .25$, $p<.01$). Finally, the Teacher Support subscale of the CES was related to the P-H subscales of Behavior ($r = .23$, $p<.05$); Intellectual and School Status ($r = .21$, $p<.05$); and Anxiety ($r = .19$, $p<.05$).

Discussion

The findings of the present study further substantiate previous findings (Galluzzi, Kirby, & Zucker, 1980) and strongly suggest a relationship between children's self-concept and environmental cues or factors involved in teacher-student and student-student interactions. The strength of the correlations obtained, however, might suggest that future in depth examination of reported subscale relationshps could yield more support for several of the subscale realtionships. Thus, implications of this study include the need for further research in order to clearly define the environmental conditions leading to overall improvement in children's self-concept and academic achievement. Further research endeavors examining children's self-concept should, therefore, take into careful consideration the environmental or

situational factors associated with the classroom setting.

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